- If there are certain DOS commands you would like performed every time DOS is started, AUTOEXEC.BAT is the place for them. Like CONFIG.SYS, you can create AUTOEXEC.BAT with COPY CON or your word processor in ASCII mode. As we have mentioned earlier, there ARE some commands perfectly suited to AUTOEXEC.BAT, particularly if you have a hard disk. Here is a typical AUTOEXEC.BAT.

PATH C:\123;C:\DBASE;C:\WP;C:\DOS

PROMPT $P GG

CD\123\PROJECTS

123

DOS will automatically set the paths and the prompt, change the active directory to your PROJECTS directory, and finally load Lotus 1-2-3.

2.2   Backing Up Is Hard To Do?

In this section we will discuss why you need to backup your data, and give you some pointers on using the hardware and software provided for that purpose.

Remember, real men (or women) aren't afraid to backup.

2.2.1   Why You Need To

Basically, there are two reasons: hard disk failure and user error. Hard disk failure can be caused by wear and tear, heat, negligence, power surges, and Acts Of God. User error might involve accidental deletion of critical data files, or an accidental re-format of the hard disk.

In either case, a well-maintained backup schedule will prevent serious data loss. Think of the time and effort required to re-enter large amounts of data, not to mention re-creating the ideas over which you sweated blood.

Backing up your data on a regular basis is simply a good habit to get into, and not really that time-consuming or painful once you are used to it.

There is a third reason for backup which is somewhat more complex.

When DOS writes a file to the disk, it updates a portion of the disk called the FAT (File Allocation Table). As DOS can never know in advance of writing a file how many sectors that file will occupy, it places entries in the FAT called "pointers", which point to the various physical sectors on the disk that contain the data in the file. As files are created, overwritten, and deleted, DOS has to store the files wherever it can on the disk. Eventually, each file may be located in several non-contiguous sectors on the disk. The symptoms of this fragmentation may be simply a gradual increase in file access times. However, if fragmentation becomes severe, error messages such as "FAT TABLE OVERFLOW", "DATA ERROR READING DRIVE C:", and "SEEK ERROR ON DRIVE C:" may appear on your screen. If you get one of these messages, CALL THE MICROCENTRE.